

BMHA Newsletter

BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA



Volume 6, Number 1

Jan/Feb/Mar 1995

EDITOR'S NOTEPAD

New Members Welcomed... If you'll look at page 5, you'll see that we've added 29 new members. More than a third of our new members are NON-hams, living in AZ, CA, CT, GA, IN, NJ, NM, and UT. Scan the list -- you might find some non-hams in your state who have just joined. Contact these people and help them get started in amateur radio. Show them your bike-mobile radio gear. Answer their questions.

New Column... Starting with this issue, Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U, will conduct an E-MAIL column -- see page 7. A charter member (since 1989), Russ has written several articles for our newsletter, perhaps most interesting being his pieces about operating CW while pedaling -- Oct '91 and Apr '92.

Kudos... Connie Fletcher, of Menominee, Michigan, is no longer a non-ham. She's now on the air and known as KB8VQR. Congratulations! Non-ham BMHAers, please send in your call sign as soon as you get your FCC amateur radio license.

HELP!... Members who sent in translations of QRP OP DE FIETS, contact me immediately. Have lost track of who you are, due to lost file. I'm embarrassed. Prize to be sent.

Mountain Surfaces in Swiss Alps... You remember Ned Mountain, WC4X, who wrote several pieces about his adventures on HF SSB while bicycle-mobile. We hadn't heard from him since he transferred to Switzerland. His letter finally arrived: "...Nancy and I doing lots of crosscountry skiing and winter hiking. Don't have the nerve to equip my bike with all of the HF goodies. I don't think the natives would understand! Have a little HF setup with a TS 440 -- look for my puny signal on the BMHA net. I can be contacted on E-mail via Compuserve 100414.216 or on Internet 100414.216@compuserve.com. Or you can write to us at Alisbachweg 1, CH 6315 Oberageri, Switzerland."

BMHA Approaches MAS... I've known two men who have cycled a route that took them through all 48 of the contiguous US states -- in no hurry, they took two years to finish them all. Let's say you decided to cycle through all the states in which BMHA has members -- and make eyeball or radio contact with at least one member in each state.

You'd have to cover 43 states! The exceptions being: Delaware, Idaho, Maine, Mississippi, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and South Dakota. If you know prospects who live in those missing states, get out and recruit them! It sure would be great if we could get MAS -- Members in All States.

—Hartley Alley, NAOA, Editor

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dayton HamVention--'95

Plans for BMHA's sixth annual Forum are being arranged by Forum Co-chairs Mike Nickolaus, NF0N and Bob Pulhuj, KE8ZJ. Over the years, members and non-members have enjoyed the speakers and demonstrations of bike-mobile gear and operating techniques. The BMHA Forum regularly draws an audience of a 100 or more. The comments "from the floor" make for a lively exchange of information, as does the daily meeting of the BMHA Lunch Bunch. Speakers, subjects and other details are now being finalized -- watch the next issue for detailed information. See you at Dayton!

BMHA's Western States Roundup

Our second annual Western States Roundup is currently being finalized by Ken Wahrenbrock, KF6NC, Forum Coordinator. The Roundup, slated for the Memorial Day Weekend, is part of the Great Western Bicycle Rally. The GWBR draws 2,000 cyclists to the Paso Robles, CA. Fairgrounds for a weekend packed with bike rides, exhibits, meetings, etc. etc. Details in the next newsletter. In the meantime, contact Ken Wahrenbrock, 9609 Cheddar St. Downey, CA 90242

'95 Pacific Crest Tour on Tap

Tour the Pacific Crest Bicycle Trail this summer. Organized by the Trail's developer, the one-week tour will run from Hamburg, CA to Lake Tahoe, CA. 50-mile days and camping/cooking. The road-based tour is limited to 10 riders, and HT/QRP hams, in particular, are encouraged to attend.

Last year's tour included two women, two Germans, four hams (three of which were BMHA members) and all ages. Contact: Bil Paul (KD6JUI), 337 Estrella Way, San Mateo, CA 94403. 415-345-7021.

Pacificon to Host a BMHA Forum

Neil Fullagar, KE6NCX, has volunteered to organize a program/demonstration of bicycle-mobile VHF and HF equipment and operating techniques to take place at the Pacificon. The Pacificon, the west coast's largest gathering of hams, is an October event, situated at Concord, CA., in the San Francisco area. If you'd like to volunteer, comment, or have suggestions for the program, contact Neil Fullagar, 401 Maitland, Alameda CA 94502. Internet: nfullagar @ ccgate.apl.com. Watch for details in the next newsletter.

HOW TO...

Mount Your HT in a Bottle

(c) 1994 John S. Allen, AA1EP

"I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy." ...Dorothy Parker

Many bicycle mobile hams agree with Dorothy — if the bottle contains a handheld transceiver. I used to stash my HT in a handlebar bag, and that was like giving it a lobotomy. Hauling it out to operate the controls while riding held out too much risk of giving me a lobotomy by road contact. Yes, I do wear a helmet. Thanks for asking.

Many mountain bike stems have room on top to mount a downtube water bottle cage using the supplied clips or small, worm-gear type automotive hose clamps; but I ride a road bike with a level-top stem and drop handlebars. A conventional front-of-the-handlebars water bottle cage would relocate my bicycle computer, exile my handlebar bag, and put the front display of my H-T out of my sight.

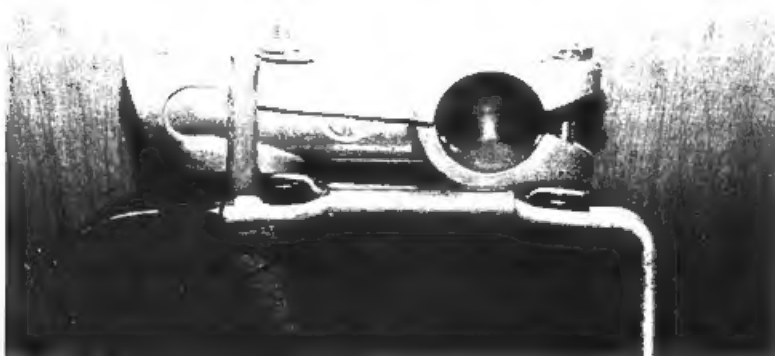


Photo 1

I solved these problems by mounting a downtube water bottle cage to a bracket hacksawn out of an old handlebar stem (photo 1). Secured by two 10-32 x 1 1/2" (or 5 x 40 mm) machine screws, the bracket places the HT slightly off-center with its front conveniently angled toward my face (photo 2). I cut windows in the bottle for the controls, display, and cables, lined the bottle with surplus helmet pads secured with contact cement, and added a toe strap around the assembly for security. The result isn't as elegant as the sewn pouch for aero bars featured in the April '94 BMHA Newsletter, but it works.



Photo 2

A clear plastic bag over the entire assembly will rainproof the HT, though you can still operate the controls and read the display. Tie off the bag underneath, around the cables. A bag also will protect the bottled HT from sweat in your jersey pocket, even after hard riding on a hot day; you can walk and talk, using the same speaker-mic or boom headset as on the bike. Take along an antenna for off-bike use if you plan to do this.

To allow installation without removing the tape and brake lever from one side of your handlebars, the stem that you modify into a cage-holding bracket must have the handlebar clamp bolt at the front rather than underneath the handlebar, and you must saw the stem's top in two horizontally. Front-bolt steel stems for a 7/8" (22.2 mm) handlebar center are common, and will fit most aluminum drop bars just outboard of the reinforced center. Most of these steel stems have a very short forward extension, so don't saw off the stem pillar as I did, but instead mount the bottle cage on it, using bolts or hose clamps.

To fit my HT over the center bulge of the handlebars and give me more hand room when riding on the tops, I made my bracket from a stem for a 25.4 mm (1 inch) handlebar center diameter. A front clamp bolt is uncommon on 25.4 mm stems, though I found three — one steel, two aluminum — during a recent raid on a bike shop junkpile.

A few top-grade road-bike stems have two-piece clamps that you don't have to saw in half. Grab one of these stems if you find it in a junkpile. BMX-type stems, common in junkpiles, also have a 25.4 mm center diameter and two-piece clamps. These stems are of heavy construction, so you may want to cut one down to save weight. Finally, I'll mention a couple of low-effort solutions: Use a few inches from the rear end of a trashed triathlon add-on handlebar, with its two-piece clamp (25.4 mm or 22.2 mm). Or use one of the extensions (22.2 mm) which sprout, like devil's horns, from the ends of mountain bike handlebars, which have learned to envy drop bars.

—John S. Allen, AA1EP
7 University Park
Waltham, MA 02154

Biographical Sketch

John S. Allen, AA1EP, is a new ham. He couldn't find a convenient exam date during the summer of 1992, so he had the whole summer to work on code speed, earning his Extra in one September exam session. He had "studied for the theory elements the expensive way," earning an electrical engineering degree from MIT in 1975. He is an avid cyclist, and works primarily as a technical translator, writer about bicycling, and expert consultant to lawyers handling bicycle accident cases. —Ed.



The author, John Allen AA1EP, bicycle-mobile with son Jacob, 3 1/2, on their tandem at the finish of a Quarter Century.

PRODUCT REVIEW

Road Test of the EMARS Chest Harness

Many BMHAers have problems carrying and operating their HT while riding. There are five components that need consideration in any solution to this problem: speaker earphone (right ear only, please), microphone, push-to-talk switch, antenna, and the HT itself.

In the simplest case, an HT, with attached rubber-duck antenna, combining all five components, is the complete station, but most of us have found that this is poorly suited to bicycle-mobile-in-motion operation. The speaker/earphone and mike are ideally located on the rider, close to ear and mouth with no need to be hand-held. The push-to-talk is best located close to your hands, in your favorite riding position, or disposed of by using voice control (VOX). For health reasons, the antenna is best located as far from your body as possible, as high as possible for best radiation performance, and might benefit by using a metal bicycle frame as a counterpoise. The HT body can be located on either the rider or the bicycle, but its display should be easily readable and its controls safely accessed while in motion. If the entire installation must port from bicycle to bicycle, or leave the bicycle with you at every stop, or if you subscribe to the notion that anything that functions as a tether between rider and bicycle poses a hazard, then there is no solution that satisfies all objectives. But, being hams, we keep trying new solutions, every season, if not every ride!

Recently, I tested the EMARS Chest Harness. Inspired by the harnesses used by ski patrols, the EMARS Chest Harness is a fabric carrier that is designed to hold an HT flat against your chest with the antenna protruding diagonally upward, toward your left shoulder. The flat body of the carrier, measuring 9.5"(h) x 8"(w), is of padded Cordura with a zippered, internal pocket. Across the diagonal of this carrier are a number of

sturdy nylon/Velcro straps that hold the HT. At the top-right is a belt-loop-like attachment point for a speaker-mike. The carrier is held securely against the riders chest by adjustable nylon straps and Fastex buckles that attach at all four corners and, passing over the rider's shoulders, form an X across the back.

The high quality of materials and construction are immediately apparent. Strapping into the EMARS Chest Harness is much quicker and easier than the description above might suggest. The carrier is held snugly against the rider's chest, even while sprinting on the drops or rocking, out of the saddle, on a hill. The carrier is clearly capable of holding the largest HTs. My IC-24AT is small and nearly disappeared under the straps, leaving the keypad inaccessible. Owners of older or larger HTs will be pleased with the design.

While the EMARS Chest Harness does not dictate location of any component other than the HT itself, on my test-rides I stuck closely to the basic format, adding a 15"-long Diamond RH-77 antenna attached directly to the IC-24AT. On one ride I used the tiny ICOM EM-46 speaker/mike attached to the top-right corner of the carrier. To my surprise, I found that transmitted audio did not suffer from talking with my head up, with the speaker/mike facing forward from 7" below my mouth. However, riding with one hand keying the PTT on the speaker/mike and the other on the bars was tiring. Riding upright, no-hands, was more relaxing and provided noticeably improved antenna position, but can hardly be recommended.

On another ride, I replaced the speaker/mike with my modified Maxon VOX/boomset, attaching the VOX/PTT control box to the carrier. The Maxon is a single-ear-piece, over-the-head band and boom-mike arrangement, and my modification is simply to discard the over-the-head parts so that I jam the remaining thin spring-steel piece into the foam of my riding helmet, just in front of my right ear. It holds the boom-set in place perfectly, riding about 1/4" out from my ear, and the mike can be quickly swung up, out of the way of my nose, when needed.

This arrangement proved very convenient for rag-chewing while under way. In this mode, the HT is more accessible than if it were in a jersey pocket, or clipped to the waist of my riding shorts. The display still cannot be read while in motion. The antenna remains in close proximity to flesh (not good), and is nearly horizontal while riding (not good), but it is relatively high (good). Also, there are no components mounted, even temporarily, on the bicycle (good). A newspaper stuffed into the front of a rider's jersey is an effective way to keep a sweaty body from chilling on a fast descent, but too hot on a climb. The EMARS Chest Harness is not as large as a newspaper, but it does reduce cooling airflow (not good).

Is the EMARS Chest Harness the solution we have all been looking for? It depends on the weights you apply to the various objectives. For the rider who chooses to carry all components on his or her body, it represents an attractive alternative, especially when used with an alternative microphone and voice control.

The EMARS Chest Harness is available for \$29.95 + \$3.50 s&h, by calling Mark, WB5KKE, 210 493 7546, or by writing to EMARS, POB 781204, SanAntonio, TX, 78278-1204.

---Stan Hunting, KFOIA
4655 Pleasant Ridge Rd
Boulder, CO 80301



Mark Williams, WB5KKE, wearing the EMARS Chest Harness.

TRAVEL & ADVENTURE

Washington's North Cascades Bike Route

Crossing Washington State over the North Cascades Highway (Highway 20) is, in my opinion, the most spectacular bicycling trip in the Pacific Northwest. For a *one-day* experience, Glacier Park's Going-To-The-Sun highway may be the most spectacular, but how about five major mountain passes in four days? — that's what you're looking at on the North Cascades crossing!



*Ham ingenuity makes 2m QSO possible.
Standing on picnic table, helper becomes
'human tower', holds up MFJ roll-up antenna.*

Our trip began in Seattle on the Burke-Gilman bike trail heading north along Lake Washington. A bed and breakfast at Shohomish was welcome after a relatively short first day's ride, 35 miles. From then on we averaged about 60 miles a day with a maximum of 75 miles. We travelled fully loaded, and camped every night except for the first and fifth.

On the second day we reached Highway 20 and camped at Rockport campground. Our route then headed east through the rugged Cascade Mountains. For several days, beginning at Rockport, we followed the Bikecentennial (now Adventure Cycling Association) Northern Tier route. For a listing of their maps write Adventure Cycling Association, POB 8308, Missoula, MT 59807-8308.

The next day we reached the base of our first major pass, which we were to climb the next morning. After Rainy Pass, 4,860', we made a quick partial descent and climbed the highest pass on our route, 5,477-foot Washington Pass. A

highest pass on our route, 5,477-foot Washington Pass. A wonderful 17-mile descent ended a memorable day in perfect weather. On subsequent days we topped out at Loup-Loup Pass, Wauconda Pass, and Sherman Pass — all between four and five thousand feet. By this time we were really in great shape and wishing we could go the distance to Bar Harbor, Maine — the destination of the Northern Tier Route.

Along our route we stayed in Winthrop, described by the Spokane newspaper's beer writer as his favorite town because there is one brewpub for each 435 people (435 residents, 1 brewpub). Another nice overnight was near Republic at Lisa's Youth Hostel (call 509-775-3933). And the North Star Bike Hostel cannot be missed. It is located high in the hills near Colville and, based on the guest book's comments, a visit here can approach a spiritual experience due to the relaxed atmosphere offered by the hosts, Moe and Charlie (call 509-684-3846).

Our route then turned south as we left the Northern Tier Route and headed for my home in Cheney, near Spokane. We were on the road for nine days and, except for some rain the first day leaving Seattle, had great weather all the way.

The ascents were hard work, but the views and pedal-less, brake-less descents made them worthwhile. My three companions and I enjoyed the trip as much as we did when we first made it in 1990, and we'll probably make it again in three or four years.

As to the ham radio opportunities, I carried a Kenwood 2-meter rig, the TH21A. It puts out either one watt or 150 mW. I replaced the rubber duck antenna with MFJ's roll-up antenna, the MFJ-1730. I was rarely able to reach a repeater, which gave me pause in terms of 2-meter activity when in the mountains. Think about it, I told myself: hams build and maintain repeaters where there are hams to use them — certainly not the case in these remote mountains. Also, mountain passes are at relatively low points in the mountain range. While I certainly could have hit many repeaters from the tops of the peaks which I could see during the trip, the mountain passes themselves were the lowest points around; each one seemed like the ground level of a coliseum.

After we reached the relative flatness of the Cascade's eastern slope, I was able to contact my dad, W7QEC, at his home in Spokane and pass on a progress report. Low band hamming would be much more interesting on this route, especially since city power is available at many campsites. I would like to try some 20 and 40 meter CW from some points along the route next time.

Since the route involves the rainy western part of the state and high mountain passes, June, July, and August are the best months for this trip. Be ready for any kind of weather: rain, cold, even snow, and hot weather on the eastern side of the state. A great extension of the trip would be to continue through to Glacier Park, served by Amtrak at East Glacier. Give me a call (509-235-4121) if you would like more information on this great trip.

—Art Reitsch, W7RVQ
910 Summit Drive
Cheney, WA 99004

NEW MEMBERS

We're pleased to add these names to our Membership List:

Barbara L. Anderson, N9XSS, 3603 Essex Ct, Bloomington IN 47401
 Joe W Anderson, N9SYH, 3603 Essex Ct, Bloomington IN 47401
 Mike Blackwell, KE3IG, 5864 Darlington Rd, Pittsburgh Pa 15217
 Robert N Bruce, 8919-D Compton St, Indianapolis IN 46240
 Ray Butler, WA4KEJ, 5952 Lialoy Dr, Mobile AL 36608
 Patrick Cook, KB0OXD, 333 W Ellsworth Av #302, Denver CO 80223
 Donald Cundy, pending, 23 Oakridge Dr, Old Lyme CT 06371

Jim Dooley, N8LXQ, 4111 Elizabeth Dr, Stevensville MI 49127
 Jack D Eaton, KB0NUU, 406 30th Av Court, Greeley CO 80631
 Connie Fletcher, KB8VQR, N 256 River Drive, Menominee MI 49858
 Neil Fullagar, KE6NCK, 401 Maitland Dr, Alameda CA 94502
 Donald Gardner, WB9JZL/KL7, POB 242731, Anchorage AK 99524
 Eliase Ghitelman, N1TNM, 7 University Park, Waltham MA 02154
 Ned Hatton, 5002 N. 64th Av, Glendale AZ 85301
 Joe Hoepfner, N0FHL, 1111 Wylie Rd #3, Norman OK 73069

Richard Johnson, 1020 Hess Terrace, Las Cruces NM 88005
 Bill Jones, N9POX, 536 W. Arlington Pl #108, Chicago IL 60614
 Dana LeMoine, AB7FG, 13213 N 69th St, Scottsdale AZ 85254
 David S McLean, K4KVR, POB 30471, Sea Island GA 31561
 William B Milway, N3TNZ, 2 Patterson Mill Rd, Bel Air MD 21015
 John D Neuner, pending, 3731 E Windsong, Phoenix AZ 85044
 Robert G Palmer, 2347 Brookhurst Dr, Atlanta GA 30338

William B Sharp, 2145 West Av, Ocean City NJ 08226
 Patrick E Taylor, W3HVG, 1200 South Market St, Bloomsburg PA 17815
 Beth Webb, N3IYK, 3830 Bell Rd, Burtonsville MD 20866
 Liz Welder, 7077 South Santa Cruz Dr #31, Salt Lake City UT 84121
 Kathy Wimble, KE6FZC, 1144 Snowberry Ct, Sunnyvale CA 94087
 James O Wood, 118 Oliver Av, Trenton NJ 08618
 Michael Youngfellow, 5882 Sierra Sierra Rd, Irvine CA 92715

With traditional ham friendliness, make contact with these new members, welcome them to BMHA, and help them with any problems they might have.

....I am an amateur tri-athlete. I often go for very long bike rides and runs to train. I like having an HT so I can get help if I need it — or I can offer help if someone else needs it.

—Eugene Skopal, AA9LA, Gurnee, IL

....I've always been interested in ham radio, but when I saw your newsletter something clicked inside and now I'm anxious to get my ticket! And yesterday on my scanner I caught a "bike mobile" on a local repeater. I'm working on my tech ticket right now. I'll take the test at a Hamfest, and if I pass I'll go shopping at the ham flea market right afterwards!

—Brian Vanderheyden, St Louis, MO

....Last year I began riding organized centuries and noticed the great assistance provided by a local ham club. As I'm interested in bike camping and long distance touring, I'm also interested in affordable, reliable communications. Ham radio seemed to be the answer. I'm now a no-code tech.

—Larry Zimmerman, KB0MBQ, Topeka, KS

BMHA NEWSLETTER

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We welcome articles, suggestions, letters, announcements, photos, artwork — anything pertaining to bicycling while operating an amateur radio, or vice versa.

Submitted material will be edited for clarity and, if necessary, shortened to fit space constraints. Material should be submitted before Mar 1, June 1, Sept 1, or Dec 1 for inclusion in the ensuing issue.

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BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA (BMHA)

Box 4009, Boulder, CO 80306



ABOUT BMHA

For the information of our first-time readers

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America got its start when a "Stray" in the June '89 QST magazine asked to "get in touch with hams who operate their radios while bicycle-mobile, or while in any other human-powered conveyance", signed by Hartley Alley, NA0A. Twenty five hams responded, filled out questionnaires, and received a summary of the collected data.

In April of '90 we had our first BMHA Forum at the Dayton HamVention. We played to a packed house, overflowed the room, and added 54 names to our mailing list. Our four subsequent forums have drawn increasingly larger audiences, and now BMHA is established as a "regular" at this world-renowned event.

This is the eighteenth issue of our quarterly newsletter, which has become the clearing house for the exchange of info and ideas for the hams who go on the air from their bicycles. Since the last issue of this newsletter we have added 28 new members. The total membership now stands at 390, with members in 42 states, and six countries.

BMHA membership puts you in touch with a friendly and helpful group of bike-riding hams. You'll make contacts through our membership directory, packet address list, bi-weekly net on 20 meters, annual meeting and Forum at the Dayton HamVention and other regional meetings, and of course through the BMHA NewsLetter, which has articles on bike trips, antennas, other gear, operating tips, etc. Membership application blank on the next to last page.

GETTING STARTED

Comparing HT's with Cell Phones & Pagers

This article compares the usefulness of ham radio HT's (handheld transceivers) with cellular telephones and pagers, for emergency, event coverage, and overall suitability for communicating from a bicycle. A comparison of cost and other relevant considerations is included.

Living in Southern California is a real treat. You can start bicycling from the ocean and on the same day end up high in the mountains. Although cycling can be a solitary, almost religious, experience, life and times dictate that some means of communications be available. Recent events here in California and elsewhere have shown that one must be prepared for disruptions to normal lifestyle due to earthquakes, floods, fires, civil unrest, crime, traffic, etc.

The communication options available to the cyclist are: pagers, handheld cellular telephones, and HT's (ham, CB, and GMRS).



Motorola Bravo Plus Pager, 3.3 oz.; Blaupunkt TC-132 Cellular Phone, 14.8 oz.; Icom IC-V21AT dual-band Ham HT, 13.8 oz.

A pager provides wide-ranging, low cost, one-way communications. Our family uses a one-line message pager to signal safe arrival, need for assistance, call home, etc. The drawback is that you must have access to a roadside telephone. Unless you are familiar with the area, payphones are difficult to locate. Pagers can be purchased for approximately \$80, including activation, and there's a \$15 monthly fee for an almost unlimited number of pages.

The cellular telephone can also be used over a wide area and several area codes. It is a direct link to non-ham family and friends. You can conduct business and contact emergency services. For the cyclist in the mountains, or sparsely populated areas, spotty cellular coverage can make communications impossible. With experience, you learn to map dead zones and locate where coverage resumes. Trying to use a cellular telephone outside the subscription area can lead to expensive "roaming" charges.

During emergencies, cellular telephone coverage is not guaranteed. Cell sites do get knocked out, and overloaded circuits can keep one from communicating. From my own

circuits can keep one from communicating. From my own personal earthquake experience, when power is cut-off, cordless telephones whose base units rely on house current are useless. Battery-powered units which can operate away from damaged structures are a necessity. The initial cost of a portable cellular phone (including charger, spare battery, cigarette lighter cord, case, activation fee, etc.) runs close to \$400 with a monthly service rate between \$2 (night owl) to \$45 (standard), plus connection charges of 20 cents per minute (off peak) to 90 cents per minute (peak).

The HT provides the cyclist with both recreational and emergency communication capability. Although HT's for CB and GMRS (General Mobile Radio Service) are available, only ham radio provides the infrastructure for unconstrained long distance communications. Located throughout the country are open repeaters to extend the range of ham HT's. Autopatch allows the ham to contact pagers and cellular telephones. Cross-band repeaters can also allow HF communications using VHF/UHF HT's.

Since most hams are club members who regularly practice emergency communications, when a catastrophic event does occur, ham communications can be reestablished quickly. If repeaters are knocked off the air, ham radio HT's can be still used for simplex communications. During our last earthquake, autopatch was used by hams to communicate directly into area codes which had become isolated. The cost of a dual-band HT (including charger, speaker-mike, spare batteries, cigarette lighter cord, case, etc.) runs around \$760. (*Used equipment would cost about \$350. —Ed.*) One can join a ham repeater club and pay a nominal monthly fee to have autopatch access over several area codes.

Since I am a new ham, I am still exploring ways of communicating while cycling. My HT is actually smaller than my cellular phone, and can easily be carried in a bike pouch. I use a speaker-mike to talk while riding, and find that the stock rubber duck antenna is adequate to contact local repeaters. I often tell my family that that ham radio is a hobby, just like cycling. As such, its costs should be "secondary."



Alan KE6LRG in QSO from bike path, Manhattan Beach. In the distance, Palos Verde and Santa Monica Bay.

In Southern California, walking, running and cycling events occur year round. Ham spotters with HT's are placed around courses to keep one eye on traffic, and the other on the

multiple pagers or cellular telephones can be used exclusively for event coverage.

My advice to non-ham cyclists: Emergencies can, and will, occur at any time -- Be Prepared! Cellular telephones and pagers have their place, but the portable ham radio HT provides the cyclist with consistent long range communication capability, and piece of mind. It's also a great hobby! There is no better time than the present to take the Technician test and get a license. A solitary ham cyclist can just hit the PTT button on his HT and instantly be in the company of new friends.

---Alan S. Okazaki, KE6LRG
577 36th Street
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

Emergency Tip, just heard on our local Disaster Net: If you are traveling without your ham gear, and can't phone home directly due to a disaster there, use your telephone calling card. It seems that credit card calls almost always make it through!

E-MAIL

Internet Happenings for Bikies

We bicyclists need to assert our rights to the Information Superhighway, lest we get run off the road by a 1.3 G.byte file going by at T3 speed.

With that in mind, I'm going to write a column for several BMHA NewsLetters showcasing information out there in cyberspace that may be of interest to us. If you know of an interesting file or service tucked away someplace then let the rest of us know about it! I'd like for this to be a two-way column, so please tell me where the bits live, so that I can write up ink for it and keep this column going. My e-mail address is: rjd@merit.edu -- and my snail-mail address is:

Russell Dwarshuis
427 Barber Ave
Ann Arbor, MI 48103-2721

Bicycle mobile Mailing List

If you have e-mail access to the Internet, the first thing you might check out is the Bikecurrent Mailing List. Quoting

from the information test for this list:

"The bikecurrent@cyclimg.org list is for the discussion of issues related to bicycle electronics. These include lighting and amateur radio equipment. Questions, comments, reviews and suggested designs are appropriate material for this list."

Instructions on how to subscribe and other information can be obtained by sending a message to: majordomo@cyclimg.org. The body of the message should have these two lines:

info bikecurrent
end

I've been on this list for several months. Most of the conversations are geared toward the care and feeding of lighting systems. If you have questions pertaining to any aspect of bicycle mobile operations, please join the list and fire away! If you have any inclination toward building a homebrew lighting system, then you should definitely sign up.

For the next column I'll check out some world-wide web sites. And of course I'll deal with any of your questions, comments, suggestions -- send them in! Till then, best regards from your e-mail connection.

---Russell Dwarshuis, KB8U

....I would like to volunteer to keep a computer data base of the BMHA membership. I would be willing to share this information with any BMHA members who would like copies. Send a blank disk along with \$2 (to cover mailing) and I'll gladly send the data disk. Please mention if you have DBase III Plus, which is the format in which I have the data. ---Joe Hoepfner, N0FHL, 1111 Wylie Rd #3, Norman OK 73069

....I have acquired a recumbent bike and find that the J-Pole antenna described in a previous issue works very well. In fact, I believe it is better than any other I have tried. It serves also as a flag pole, which is a must for the low profile bicycle I have. My handheld on low power hits repeaters 20 to 30 miles away.

---Ken Covey, W0ZQJ, Moorhead, MN

Membership Application

MEMAPPL3.wps 6 15 93 /100 /disc /pc /newmem /pc /tape /news /Q's /rest /walc /env
BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA date _____
Box 4009, Boulder, CO 80306

Individual \$10 _____ new member? _____ renewal? _____
(US or Canada)

Family \$15 _____ Foreign \$15 _____ Donation \$ _____
(limit: two persons)

Make check payable to BMHA, in US dollars or international money order.

Name _____ Call _____

Address _____ License Class _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Age _____ Most miles bicycled in one day _____

BMHA's Official Logo

The next time you need to order new QSL cards, don't forget to include the BMHA logo in your design. Here's the official logo, as designed by Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U.

BICYCLE MOBILE



HAMS OF AMERICA



BICYCLE MOBILE



HAMS OF AMERICA

QSL CORNER

In this space we feature QSL cards that have a bicycle-mobile motif. Send yours in. We'll run it.

WD5FFH <i>Bicycle Mobile</i>					
Wayne Estes 727 E. Maple Ave. Mundelein, IL 60060 U. S. A.					
					
					
Antenna: 8 ft. Hamstick Vertical Transceiver: MFJ 20 meter SSR Travel Radio (12W out) Interface: Icom HS-10 headset, PTT switch on handlebar Battery: 14.4V, 3 Amp-Hr Ni-Cad					
Confirming 20 meter SSB contact with:					
DAY	MONTH	YEAR	UTC	RST	
<input type="checkbox"/> PSE QSL <input type="checkbox"/> THX <input type="checkbox"/> A WIDE OR					

Easily one of the best designed bicycle-mobile cards we've seen, this just in from WD5FFH. On the reverse side:

"I've only ridden 6 times with this setup so far. I contacted 25 states and 14 countries. I never expected to get out to Europe with relative ease from my bicycle.

I highly recommend the MFJ-9420 for HF bicycle mobile. It's 6 x 6 x 2 inches, less than 2 lbs, low RX current drain, and it really gets out, with compliments on the TX audio quality.

Total weight is about 8 lbs, including Xcvt, battery, antenna, and mounting plate. My PTT switch is cannibalized from a Performance Bike Shop electronic horn."

Back Issues Still Available

You may purchase any of the seventeen back issues of the BMHA NewsLetter for \$1.75 each, postpaid. For info on the contents of the various issues send a business-size SASE to: BMHA, POB 4009, Boulder CO 80306, and ask for the Index of Back Issues. This service available to members only.

BMHA NEWSLETTER

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America
PO Box 4009
Boulder, CO 80306

Address Correction Requested

First Class Mail

FOR SALE

Do you have bicycle-mobile-related radio equipment for sale? Send in a description and we'll run it. Limit of 20 words, plus your name, address, phone. For members only.

BMHA NET....ON 20

Winter Perfect Time to Check into Net

Now that ice and snow and frigid temps make cycling an ordeal (for most of us), it's time to crank up your HF rig and get on the BMHA Net.

TIME: 2000 UTC and four hours later at 0000 UTC.

DATE: 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month.

FREQ: 14.253 — plus or minus the QRM.

With propagation not being very favorable these days as the sun goes down, it's best you aim for the 2000 UTC session. However, don't hesitate to try the later session at 0000 UTC — we'll cover that one too.

Look for me, NF0N, at those times, and if I'm unable to call the net please look for those who have picked up the net when I've been out of town. In particular, look for Assistant Net Controls Jim Kortge, NU8N, and John Liebenrood, K7RO. Jim covers the East, John covers the West, and I cover the middle.

When there's ice on the roads, I head for my cozy shack and switch on the linear — trying to pedal on ice has given me too many spills and scrapes. See you on the net! 73....

—Mike Nickolaus, NF0N, BMHA Net Control
316 E. 32nd St.
S. Sioux City, NE 68776

